

## CARIES OF BONE.

By ROBT. T. COOPER, M.D., Physician, Diseases of Ear, London Homeopathic Hospital.

I TAKE up the pen to write a few lines on the subject of caries of bone for the simple reason that I find our young homeopaths seem to have no idea of what homeopathy is capable in the way of cure in this, the most ordinary form of bone disease.

[Continued on next page.]

If there be one point upon which homeopathy contrasts more favourably with allopathy than another, it is in this variety of disease.

I say it without fear of contradiction from any one who has given homeopathic treatment fair play, *that the cases are indeed exceptional in which any form of operation is required for a carious condition of bone structure*. Except in dental caries I cannot call to mind any cases in which the operation of gouging or scooping the denuded bone is habitually required.

If such cases are not often reported, it is because they are not attended with much interest in regard to the prevailing symptoms. In the early days of homeopathy it was much more usual to record cases of the kind. Absence of symptoms evidently characterised an example of the disease lately brought in this way to my notice : A lady in the neighbourhood of my residence had been condemned to have the womb scraped out in consequence of flooding—a flooding that I may add a few doses of a homeopathic remedy soon set right—and her expressed reason for sending for me was from my having, some years back, cured her nephew whose elbow had been condemned to excision, and who is now a fine healthy young man with an arm as strong and as supple as could be wished for.

As chance would have it I came upon the meagre notes of his case yesterday in my hospital book. My notes only record the name of the disease, scrofulous disease of the elbow-joint, and the prescription, *Calc.-carb.* 3x for one week, and a teaspoonful of Flitwick water to four ounces of *Aq.-pur.*, a dessertspoonful night and morning for the next week ; at the end of which period record states the child was “ very much better.” It was not till eight years afterwards that I learned that the child had quite recovered, after having been condemned to be operated on by every doctor who had previously seen him. The child was when treated six years old, and his is the only case, I imagine, I have ever had under me at the hospital other than an ear case for some fifteen years.

The almost infinitesimal doses of Flitwick water represented, in fact, a homeopathic remedy, as it contains a large proportion of silica and other earthy constituents—proved remedies where osseous structures are involved.

The child whose case is just recorded was brought specially to me in consequence of my having, a few years

before, cured a boy of caries of the elbow-joint, where the joint was much swollen and where discharging sinuses were seen running up the arm and down the forearm, and in which everything looked unfavourable for success of treatment.

My experience of these cases is that they generally begin improving from the first, and that they quickly discontinue treatment. For example, a case was brought me at the hospital, some years back, in which the parents were in a very distressed state of mind about their daughter, aged fifteen, who had twice been operated on at St. Thomas's Hospital for caries of the mastoid process, and in which the whole of the mastoid appeared diseased, and where to have operated any further would have been to have endangered life. My notes of the case are not to hand while writing ; but of this I am sure—I prescribed *Silicea* 3x internally and a lotion of two grains of *Silico-Fluoride of Sodium* (*Salufer*, as it is called) to six ounces of water, and heard nothing for two years of the patient. Then she returned to be treated for deafness, and her statement to me was that the character of her case had changed a day or two after using the lotion, and that she had not thought it necessary to come again. I need hardly say she had a good scolding. It is too bad to manifest ingratitude like this when consequences are of such vital importance.

When, in necrosis, sequestra of dead bone keep up local irritation, the indication for removal is obvious, especially if this can be done without injury to vital parts ; but the fine particles that are thrown off from a merely carious bone do not appear to interfere with the action of the indicated remedy. Even apparently hopeless cases of pressure-effects, however, from a spiculum of bone can sometimes be relieved by medicine. Some years ago I was called in in consultation by the late Dr. Duncan Matheson to see a gentleman who had fallen from his horse and had sustained concussion of the brain, and for which he had been operated on ; the surgeons professed to have removed a spiculum of bone pressing on the brain, but the most dangerous symptoms of concussion remained, viz., comatose condition, with high temperature, and a weak and irregular pulse, the stools and urine being passed involuntarily. Every one of the symptoms began to improve the moment the remedies we gave

began to act, and after about six weeks' treatment he left town for his country place apparently quite well. I have no notes of the case, and only refer to it to show how slow we ought to be in despairing of a case. I need hardly add that the surgeons who had attended were unanimous in favour of further operative measures. There was, of course, no bone disease present ; it was a pure and simple case of brain compression from accident, and as such had been diagnosed by all who had seen him. The brain seemed to accommodate itself to the presence of the bone after he was subjected to homeopathic treatment.

A great deal of odium attends the man who attempts to save a patient from an operation and does not succeed, and nothing like commensurate credit is given should he be successful in saving a limb or even life itself, while the honour and glory of an operation is noised abroad far and near ; and more than this, the operation is paid for handsomely, while the simple and unostentatious prescription is soon forgotten, and is seldom remunerated at its true worth. Hence *Ars vera longa, vita brevis est*.

30A, George Street, Hanover Square, W.

---